

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A wireless communication network includes base stations that operate with variable transmit power adjustments during soft handoff of a mobile station. Base stations adjust current transmit powers up or down using variable step sizes responsive to power control commands from the mobile station. Step size depends on the difference between current transmit power and a common reference power. Generally, power control commands that move transmit power away from the common reference power are attenuated by decreasing the step size, and those that move the transmit power toward the reference power are amplified by increasing step size. A base station controller adjusts the common reference power during soft handoff to reduce differences between it and the current transmit powers. Thus, step size may be large at the outset of soft handoff to quickly reduce transmit power imbalance between base stations, but tends to decrease with subsequent adjustments of the common reference power.